

UMASS/AMHERST



312066013159814

LIBRARY

OF THE



MASSACHUSETTS
AGRICULTURAL
COLLEGE

SOUR BV
638
C6
V.3

2

v.3

This book may be kept out

TWO WEEKS

only, and is subject to a fine of TWO CENTS a day thereafter. It will be due on the day indicated below

~~8/27/19~~

11 11 11 11 11

[illegible]

CARD

PAMPHLETS

ON

THE COUNTRY CHURCH

OF THE
COUNTRY CHURCH
OF THE
COUNTRY CHURCH

• • • •

Volume 3

LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF
MICHIGAN
ANN ARBOR
MICHIGAN

630.302

C83

v.3

Federal council of the churches of Christ in America. What every church should know about its community.

General Association of Congregational Churches of Massachusetts. Advance reports of various committees. 1908 and 1909

McElfresh, F. The country Sunday school

McNutt, M. B. Modern methods in the country church

McNutt, M. B. A post-graduate school with a purpose

Massachusetts Federation of Churches. Quarterly bulletin. Facts and factors. October 1910

"The part of the church in rural progress as discussed at the Amherst Conference."

Root, E. T. State federations

Taft, A. B. The mistress of the rural manse

Taft, A. B. The tent mission

Taylor, G. Basis for social evangelism with rural applications

Wells, G. F. An answer to the New England country church question.

Wells, G. F. What our country churches need

Wilson, W. H. The church and the transient

Wilson, W. H. Conservation of boys

Wilson, W. H. The country church

Wilson, W. H. The country church program

Wilson, W. H. Don't breathe on the thermometer

Wilson, W. H. The farmers' church and the farmers' college

Wilson, W. H. Getting the worker to church

Wilson, W. H. The girl on the farm

Wilson, W. H. How to manage a country life
institute

Wilson, W. H. "Marrying the land."

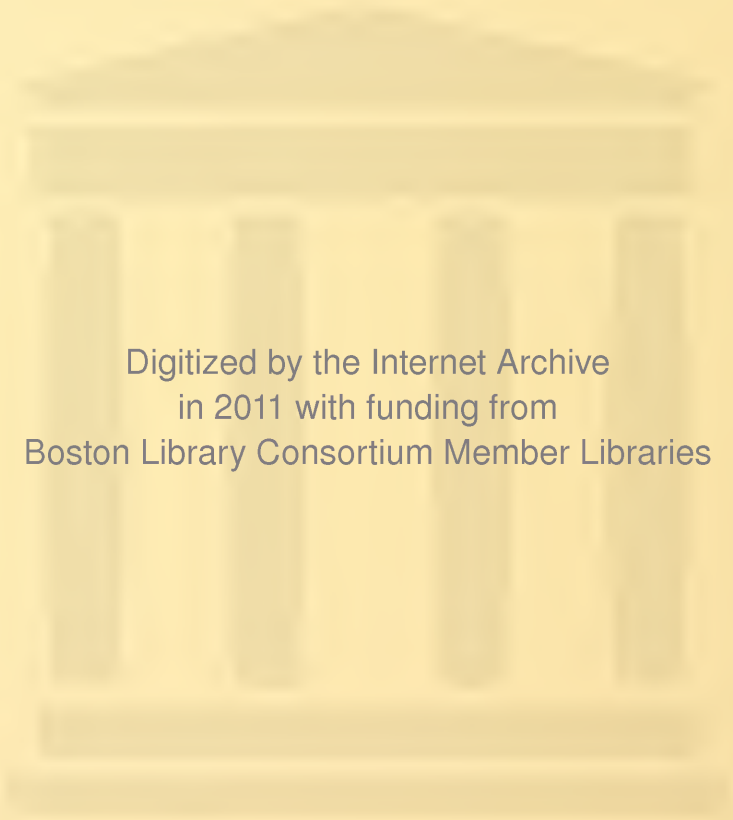
Wilson, W. H. No need to be poor in the country

Wilson, W. H. Synod's opportunity

Wilson, W. H. What limits the rural Evangel

.....

The church and country life. Pamphlet issued
by the Board of Home Missions of the Presby-
terian Church.



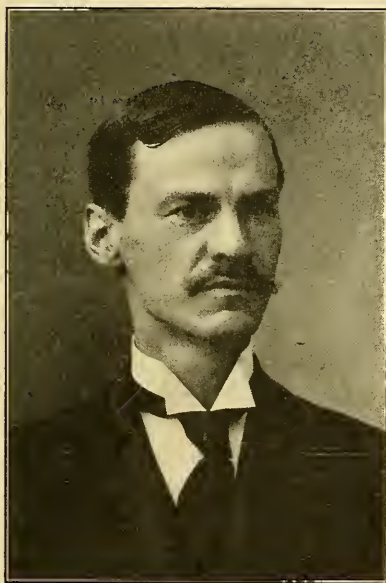
Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2011 with funding from
Boston Library Consortium Member Libraries

State Federations

BY THE REV. E. TALLMADGE ROOT.*

The State Federation is the keynote of the massive arch of Christian co-operation now in process of erection.

The National Federation of Churches kindles enthusiasm by the vastness of its conceptions and constituency; but it lacks the definiteness which local tasks alone can give. Local Federations, — county, city, village or township organizations, face tasks concrete and definite; but they are not large enough to command great enthusiasm or to enable them to escape dangerous fluctuations of interest through change of personnel or change of personal feeling.



REV. E. TALLMADGE ROOT.

In contrast with both, the State Federation, on the one hand, has a scope and field not too large to be defined and grasped; and, on the other, magnitude enough to fire the imagination and eliminate the fluctuations caused by the ever-changing personnel of pastors and church-leaders. Thus the State Federa-

*Chairman of the Committee on State Federations; other members: O. P. Gifford, H. M. Bell, W. H. Bolster, S. P. Cresap, E. A. Elmore, Charles R. Erdman, John Galbraith, T. W. Henderson, Walter S. Hove, H. W. Jessup, George R. Lunn, Wallace McMullen, F. T. Rouse, S. O. Royal and W. W. Smith.

tion is able to supplement the national movement on one side and local movements on the other, giving the former definiteness, and the latter inspiration and momentum. The success of church federation, therefore, depends upon the efficiency of the State Federations. Upon this important topic, your Committee is asked to report.

It is gratifying to your Committee that it is not obliged to theorize, but is able to describe the proper organization and functions of a State Federation on the basis of the practical experience of successful organizations.

Two types have contributed to the present ideal. The older is the Interdenominational Commission, organized in Maine in 1891, with the specific task of avoiding hopeless denominational rivalry in small fields. The second is the Federation, the name and essential principles, viz: accurate knowledge of the religious conditions and needs, being suggested by the success of the organization of churches in New York formed in 1895. The principle was first applied to State, as to National, organization in 1900. The aims and methods of the Maine Commission were included.

We append a table of State Federations, so far as they have been reported to us, giving date and basis of organization, as well as lines of work developed. From personal knowledge or correspondence, your Committee submits the following outline of what actual experience seems to show should be the organization and work of a State Federation.

The gist of the matter may be compressed into the following definition: "A State Federation of Churches is a joint committee, officially representing the denominational bodies, to learn all the facts and ally all the factors, and thus to overcome our overlapping and our overlooking."

A State Federation is a joint-committee of officially appointed representatives of the State denominational bodies. The essential requirement is that the federation must in some way officially represent the denominations. If it does not do this, if it is a council of selected individuals, or of delegates from local churches or councils of churches, it may be an excellent thing, but it is not a federation of churches. The fundamental theory is that the denominations are accepted

as they exist, without debate as to their justification or permanence, and the admitted evils of this form of ecclesiastical organization are to be remedied by a federal union which leaves unimpaired their independence. The theory may be illogical, but it accords with the characteristic methods of the Anglo-Saxon as contrasted, e. g., with the logical French race.

This requirement is accepted by all existing State Federations. They make denominational representation the basis: although, as we shall see, some add representatives of inter-denominational organizations or local co-operative councils. Differences in application may be noted.

(1) Quota of Representation. The commissions give all denominations an equal representation, usually three.* The federations recognize the equality of all denominations by giving to each one a representative, and the justice of a representation proportionate to strength, by allowing one additional delegate for a specified number of communicants, varying from 3,000 in Rhode Island to 15,000 in New York. Wisconsin combines the two plans by giving each denomination three members, to begin with.

(2) Definition of "State Body." Some difficulty arises from the fact that denominational organizations do not always coincide with State lines. Thus, many Methodist Episcopal conferences overlap, e. g. six conferences, only one lying wholly within the state, are asked to appoint delegates to the Massachusetts Federation. The yearly meeting of many smaller bodies embraces several States. This difficulty is overcome by asking such bodies to appoint delegates to each state federation in proportion of its communicants within the State.

(3) Scope of invitation. The Commissions have been confined to a group of denominations kindred in conceptions and methods of Christian work. Some of the federations make it their avowed aim to include every ecclesiastical body recognized as Christian, the term in some cases being defined doctrinally and in other cases practically.

*The Methodist Episcopal Church, having two conferences in Maine, has four, to allow equal division.

The State Council thus formed of official denominational representatives, alone or with other members, constitutes the governing body, to which officers and committees are responsible, and whose members in turn are responsible to the denominational bodies respectively appointing them. In most States, the whole Council meets only once a year, or at call. In others there are both spring and fall meetings. An executive committee, sometimes consisting of a representative from every denomination, is authorized to act in the interims.

In some States, the council has decided that, in order to secure steady and logical development, some one man must be enabled to devote his whole time to the work. Two States, by jointly employing the same man, secure the advantages of economy and of sharing each other's experience. The chief hindrance is the difficulty of raising sufficient funds. It may also be said that the employment of a salaried executive will prove a disadvantage, if it weakens in any degree the sense of responsibility felt by the members of the council. In the very nature of Church Federation, the deliberations of the council as representing the denominations are the essential thing, the work of the executive being only preparatory and supplementary. In proportion as this is realized, it is to be expected that the sessions of the council will grow in dignity, importance and volume of business. It is the Senate of the Federated Churches of the Commonwealth.

The only serious embarrassment in the development of a State Federation now arises from the side of finances. We believe that the proper method of providing adequate income is by appropriation of its just quota by each denominational body, from its general or special funds. By this act, a dignity is given to the organization which it can receive in no other way, and which it deserves in view of its unique nature. It is the Hague Tribunal of the Churches; and like that international bureau, should be directly supported by the ecclesiastical states composing it. This principle is slowly but surely establishing itself, in spite of admitted difficulties. The risk of establishing a precedent, to which other interdenominational organizations may appeal for appropriations, is eliminated, if the uniqueness of Church Federation is clearly

held. The next best method, prevailing in one State, is to ask for appropriations from the funds of the stronger local churches. Both methods must at present, probably, be supplemented by personal contributions from individuals who recognize the far-reaching significance of the movement. The New England federations have raised the question of the endowment of each State. A moderate endowment would remove all embarrassment, relieve the already overburdened churches, and stimulate progress immensely. In what way could any man of wealth do to-day more for every church and every good cause in his commonwealth?

To learn all the facts and to ally all the factors is the only method of usefulness open to a federation.

I. To learn all the facts. A voluntary federation of denominations, some of which, being centralized in government cannot admit any external authority, and others of which insist on the autonomy of the local church even within the denomination, in the nature of the case, can possess no authority but the logic of the facts. To this, it may appeal; and it needs no other authority. As a joint bureau of information, it will avoid prejudice and suspicion, and soon win a recognized place of growing usefulness, securing necessary co-operation and readjustment, without coercion, by the mere force of the facts and their appeal to Christian public sentiment.

Among the facts, which its office must collect and make available, in order to perform this function, the following may be named:

(1) A list of all the pastors in the State, and possibly church-clerks and laymen of prominence, in every local community. The federation requires such a list for its own use in distributing information to form public opinion; and can serve all interdenominational causes by furnishing duplicates, for which there is frequent call. To compile and keep up to date is no small task.

(2) A list of all churches in each city or township, with location by ward or village, membership, and income. This information is necessary both for statistical investigations, the

discovery of overlapping, and the intelligent promotion of local co-operation.

(3) A compilation of statistics, civil and religious, State and local, as the basis for the study of the task and degree of success of the churches in reaching the entire population.

(4) A file of letters, reports, and documents, giving further information about localities and local churches, especially their experiments in co-operation. This should include annual reports of all denominational bodies, the histories and anniversaries of local churches, newspaper clippings of any permanent importance. All denominational papers should be on file.

(5) Diagrams, charts and maps, to present the common tasks of the churches to the eye, should be prepared and made available for all.

(6) A list of interdenominational organizations for religious education or evangelism, philanthropy or reform, with information as to their organization, income, and work.

(7) A reference library of books on practical methods especially of co-operation and service to the community.

In short, the federation should, and may, become a complete bureau of religious information, to which in time every Christian worker will get into the habit of turning, because he can there learn what he needs to know as nowhere else. Since knowledge is power, it will, in this way, secure, without any suspicion of infringing upon denominational or local independence, a recognized place and influence. It will, furthermore, create the motive.

II. To ally all the factors. This is its real task. By its progress in allying the factors, its success is to be judged. The inertia which it must overcome is the traditional lack of co-operation between ecclesiastical bodies. By the logic of the facts, it must convince the denominations of the state, and the churches of each community, of the imperative necessity of concerted action in order to accomplish their common tasks, e. g., in Rhode Island, a study of the missionary needs of the State, especially among the foreign-born, was furnished to every Congregational pulpit for a sermon on a given Sunday. The next day, a leading business man remarked: "I

see that the churches of the State never can meet these needs unless federated." That remark made possible a laymen's luncheon, to which through his generosity, 100 leading men of all denominations were invited, and at which was secured an advisory finance committee of leading capitalists. When the churches are thus convinced, the federation must be able to furnish them with information as to organization and methods and to render any other assistance needed.

Let it be noted that the federation itself is not a "factor." When asked: "What is your federation doing?" the proper answer is: "Nothing! It does not exist to do anything. It is not to be efficient, but a coefficient. If it did anything by itself, however efficiently, it would defeat its own end, which is to enable the churches themselves to act together so as to secure greater efficiency in their own distinctive work." Some local movements, to emphasize this, have hit upon the happy term: "The Federated Churches" instead of "The Federation."

As previously explained, the denominational bodies are allied by their appointment of representatives on the State Council. Time and effort are required to see that the request is presented to every ecclesiastical organization, delegations appointed, and the annual reports made to it, by the delegation of the field secretary, so as to sustain and increase the interest.

There are also many scattered undenominational or union churches, of varying strength, but all lacking the broader sympathy, counsel and backing, and the outlet for missionary zeal, which a denominational connection gives. Ascertaining the existence of these by its knowledge of every community, the state federation, without infringing their independence or forming a new denomination can bring them into touch with each other and with the Federated Churches of the State.

Some federations invite interdenominational organizations like the Sunday-school Association, Anti-Saloon League, etc., to appoint representatives, with the design of making the federation a clearing-house and alliance of all the moral and religious factors of the state. Practically, the advantage of this

has not always been apparent; possibly owing to a natural jealousy on the part of these older organizations toward an organization with more comprehensive claims. But this alliance has been conspicuously successful in the Wisconsin Federation, which makes it a marked feature, by joint convention and joint periodical. In Rhode Island, the representatives of Brown University and the State Agricultural College have proved of inestimable service. "All the factors" may wisely be defined to include more than the denominational organizations.

Some federations, e. g., Wisconsin, invite also local federations to appoint one representative and one additional for each 2,000 communicants in the membership of their constituent churches. The advantage is that the interest of the local organizations in their own and the state movement is stimulated, and the plan of organization made theoretically complete. Other States have rejected the proposition, as an attempt to combine two incompatible bases of representation, and to make organization unnecessarily cumbersome. But whether it gives them representation or not, a large part of the task of the State Federation is to organize the churches in every minor political division, i. e. city or township. By political divisions, rather than villages, for several reasons:

(1) Only by covering every political division, can we be sure that the whole State is covered.

(2) To ascertain the task before the local churches and their efficiency in meeting it, religious and civil statistics must be compared; and the latter are for political divisions.

(3) Civic action on the part of the churches, i. e. in law-enforcement, must proceed on lines of township, etc.

(4) Even if the churches could otherwise accomplish their own ends otherwise, they owe it to the community to strengthen the local civic life, expressed in the town-meeting, etc., too much weakened to-day.

When it has convinced the churches of any community of the necessity of alliance, the State Federation must be prepared to give them information as to methods of organization and work. There are now tested types of co-operation adapted respectively to city, village, and rural township. The full dis-

cussion of these methods belongs to another of your committees, and we shall refer to their work under our third heading. It is sufficient to note here that local organization may belong to either of two types. These are known in Massachusetts and Rhode Island as "The Westerly Way" and "Methuen's Method."

(1) "The Westerly Way" assumes that the pastors ex officio represent the churches, and may, without formal authorization, organize and act in their name. In some cases, such a ministerial body has even adopted the name "The Federated Churches." The advantage of this plan is its simplicity and economy of time and organization. Pastors know what is needed, and it can be done with less discussion. The success and permanence of the plan, however, depends on the personality and mutual confidence of the ministers.

(2) In "Methuen's Method," the churches join the League by formal vote, and agree to certain lines of co-operation, as stated union meetings, a periodic canvass, etc. They may appoint pastors and delegates to constitute the voting body; or all the members of the churches may be entitled to vote at the annual meeting. The advantage of the plan is that it commits the churches themselves, and renders permanence less dependent on the personality of the pastors. In one or other of these ways, the State Federation should ally the churches of every subdivision. Where there are too few churches in a township, neighboring towns may of course be grouped.

But organization is only a means. The challenge of a business man remains to be answered: "But what can the churches do together?" This involves our third head:

III. The work to be done. Prof. Commons has aptly said that the two great faults of our American denominationalism are its overlapping and its overlooking. Work is overcoming resistance along a line. The work which Church Federation has to do is this: To overcome our overlapping and our overlooking.

1. To overcome our overlapping. This was the first need to be realized. To meet it the Maine Interdenominational Commission was organized in 1891, and has blazed the way which the whole country is now beginning to follow. The

five denominations represented adopted at the outset these seven principles:

That church extension into destitute communities should be conducted, as far as practicable, according to the following considerations:

1. No community, in which any denomination has any legitimate claim, should be entered by any other denomination through its official agencies without conference with the denomination or denominations having said claims.

2. A feeble church should be revived, if possible, rather than a new one established to become its rival.

3. The preferences of a community should always be regarded by denominational committees, missionary agents, and individual workers.

4. Those denominations having churches nearest at hand should, other things being equal, be recognized as in the most advantageous position to encourage and aid a new enterprise in their vicinity.

5. In case one denomination begins gospel work in a destitute community it should be left to develop that work without other denominational interference.

6. Temporary suspension of church work by any denomination occupying a field should not be deemed sufficient warrant in itself for entrance into that field by another denomination. Temporary suspension may be deemed abandonment when a church has had no preaching and held no meetings for an entire year or more.

7. All questions of interpretation of the foregoing statements, and all cases of friction between denominations, or churches of different denominations, should be referred to the Commission through its executive committee.

During the first thirteen years of the Commission's existence, there were fifty-one communities on record, where encroachment, friction or competition of some kind had called for adjustment. In three new villages, the order in which churches ought to enter was amicably settled. In one-half of the twelve cases of formal arbitration, the decision of the

committee has been accepted, the denomination so advised withdrawing; and in six cases, the decision has been disregarded, in thirty-seven cases, consultation and friendly conference have sufficed to adjust the strain. Many other instances have shown that the very existence of the Commission prevents aggression or insures voluntary adjustment. In 1908, the Commission decided to make a comprehensive study of the whole State, to discover all existing cases of overlapping, and to take the initiative in proposing adjustment. By this comprehensive survey, it hoped to be able to point out opportunities for mutual exchange, so that "in one town denomination A may surrender to B its church interests, and in another town, B may surrender an equal interest to A." Not merely the commissions but the federations as well have generally adopted the Maine methods.

A somewhat different line of approach has been adopted by two federations which face a more complex situation because of the larger number of denominations represented, respectively fourteen and seventeen, and the larger and more heterogeneous population, foreign and urban. The following "Plan to Promote Comity" was adopted by both in 1905:

(1) To form public opinion, publish the facts, both general and typical.

(2) Call conferences of denominational authorities that acquaintance with each other's work and personality may prevent or remove misunderstandings, and secure voluntary readjustments.

(3) Urge upon denominations anywhere found overlapping the importance of adjusting their work by negotiation and where possible by exchange of fields.

(4) Provide arbitrators, where this is required and requested, whose decision shall have only the authority of its own obvious wisdom and the Christian public sentiment back of it.

Gratifying progress has been made in all these lines. The publication of facts is rapidly forming public sentiment. The conferences have proved happy and helpful. Increasing willingness to yield for the sake of readjustment is manifest on the part of denominational secretaries; the chief difficulty

arising from the inertia of the local churches. The aim has been to avoid putting any denomination in the position of a defendant. The watchword is negotiation rather than arbitration. A complete list of all the churches in the State is being made to discover every case of overlapping.

The readjustment of our overlapping is doubtless a long and difficult task; but it is one which will in time be completed. It is the negative and temporary side of church federation. The permanent and positive work is:

2. To overcome our overlooking. In spite of churches so numerous that they duplicate and interfere, there are multitudes of neglected neglectors both among the incoming multitudes, the crowded population of the cities, and the scattered habitants of declining rural towns. They neither attend nor care for the Church. Present methods seem powerless to reach them. Unless the Church can find a way to make the indifferent different, it must confess future progress impossible. If it despairs of reaching the last, least and lowest of the lost, it is false to its Master! In seeking the true method, two principles seem obvious:

(1) Knowledge of men alone gives power over men. The time has come when the churches may and must know every individual in the entire community as accurately as they now know their own membership.

(2) This must be done co-operatively; both because the task is too vast for any one church or denomination, and because the churches are so close together, that unless they intentionally co-operate they will inevitably compete.

These principles may be adapted and adopted in every type of community. It is the work of the State Federation to see that their importance and adaptability is understood, and that they are put into practice by each local group of churches. To the cities it may recommend the co-operative parish plan. To large villages and suburbs, the Jamaica plan of a joint visitor; and to rural churches, town or county federation. It thus becomes possible, as in two States already, to announce the watchword: "Some church responsible for each square mile!" Responsible, i. e. to know and seek in some way every individual therein, mutually reporting pref-

erences to sister churches. The area of each "responsibility district," of course, varies from one city block to a whole town of forty square miles. The keynote is responsibility! Dynamite is in that word! Its significance once realized, it will revolutionize the relation of the churches to the community and to each other.

Of course, knowledge is but the fundamental prerequisite of persistent evangelism, using invitation printed, penned and personal, as well as the mass-meeting; and evangelism is but the beginning of service on the part of the federated churches to the community. But such systematic knowledge of men and conditions is the indispensable first step in all lines of service. It will discover the real problems, rouse the churches, show them the defects of their work and guide them to new tasks and new methods. The churches have as great an opportunity as ever to-day, if they will combine to meet the real needs of each community, from building roads and organizing industry, like John Frederick Oberlin, to swinging the thought of a whole great metropolis to religious things by concerted evangelism. The State Federation, like a general, taking in the whole field, can suggest what is needed at each point, and make possible what we have never had before, a systematic campaign to Christianize every phase of the life of the entire Commonwealth!

But overlapping and overlooking do not exhaust the needs that call for Church Federation. We summarize other possibilities under a third topic:

3. Co-operation in common tasks. The chief, and only serious objection to Church Federation is the multiplicity of existing interdenominational organizations. "Why another?" is often asked.

The objection, upon examination, turns into an argument. Why have we so many organizations? Because hitherto the churches have co-operated piecemeal, forming a new agency every time they have discovered a new need for co-operation. The peculiarity of federation is that it is an organization, not to do any specific thing, but whatever the churches need and desire to do together. It will, therefore, not only render un-

necessary further multiplication of agencies, but will make possible elimination and consolidation of those now existing.

It is necessary to enumerate only a few of the lines that have been taken up by state federations to illustrate the possibilities.

As a bureau of information, the federation may render valuable service, not merely in making a study of missionary needs, as the number, increase and location of the incoming multitudes; but also by investigating special problems like the boarding-house population, religious education, and by making known new methods, like the Vacation Daily Bible School. Upon the basis of a study of the multiplicity of philanthropic organizations, one federation called the attention of the public to the danger of duplication and the wisdom of investigation before forming new organizations, if not, of merging those existing,—an address which struck fire at once.

The enforcement and improvement of law often becomes the imperative duty of Local or State Federations, especially in regard to Sunday-rest, liquor-selling, sexual immorality and child labor. The policy of the federation should be to use and back up the organizations existing for these specific ends. But it should emphasize the importance of the "responsibility districts," which it establishes. When these cover the State, and the churches so appreciate their opportunity and responsibility, that each church will know the position of every voter on moral issues and tirelessly work to place every one upon the right side, moral reforms will come swiftly and permanently. The fort is then built, the guns placed, ready for any emergency.

In one State, a committee on public opinion, feeling incompetent to express what it has no means of ascertaining, is forming a body of counsellors, covering every community, class and denomination, who may give voluntary or requested expressions of opinion.

One committee on comity has attempted to define the principles which should guide pastors and church workers in pastoral visitation and invitation.

The usefulness of an official organ, regularly mailed to every pastor and to as large a number of subscribers as possible, in

order to report facts and form public sentiment, is suggested, by the practice of several States.

The usefulness of the field secretary in reflecting back to the churches, in sermons and addresses, the impressions made upon one given the unique opportunity of studying the religious needs of the commonwealth from the standpoint of all the churches combined, should also be noted. In all these ways, the State Federation may, and already does, make the practical unity of the churches of Christ in its commonwealth a tangible reality.

Our conclusion, from this review of the actual experience of existing State Federations, is that such organizations are both practicable and necessary, and that there has already been worked out a practical program of activities as definite and comprehensive as has ever been proposed for any religious or civic campaign. We have planned the work; let us work the plan.

And furthermore, we feel that far more important than any concrete results in moral reforms, ecclesiastical growth, or even the deepening of the religious life of individuals and communities, will prove the demonstration of the essential unity of the Christian forces of the Commonwealth. They do not need to be made one. They need only to be convinced that they are one,—one, not in polity, but in purpose; not in doctrine, but in the practical effort “to do,” as Christ said, “the will of my Father which is in Heaven.”

TABLE OF STATE FEDERATIONS

The following table of State Federations and the definite lines of work in which several of them are engaged will be read with interest:

STATE	Title of Organization.	Year, organized.	Quota of denominational representation	Number of denominations federated.	Number of interdenominational organizations represented.
Connecticut,	Fed.	1906	1 to 10,000	.....	.....
Maine,	Com.	1891	3 each	5	.....
Massachusetts,	Fed.	1901	1 to 15,000	.....	.....
Montana,	Com.	1906	3 each	5	.....
Nebraska,	Fed.	1909	.....	.....	.....
New Hampshire,	Com.	1903	3 each	4	.....
New Jersey,	Fed.	*	.....	.....	.....
New York,	Fed.	1900	1 to 15,000	6	Invited
North Dakota, .....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....
Ohio,	Fed.	1901	.....	.....	.....
Pennsylvania,	Ev.Al.	.....	.....	.....	.....
Rhode Island,	Fed.	1901	1 to 3,000	17	7
South Dakota,	Fed.	1905 3 & 1	to 5,000 ..	.....	.....
Utah, .....	.....	*	.....	.....	.....
Vermont,	Com.	1899	3 each	5	.....
Wisconsin,	Fed.	1898	1 to 10,000	11	6

* Being organized.

LINES OF WORK.

Maine.—Comity. Local co-operation recommended.

Massachusetts.—Comity. Three types of local co-operation. General co-operation. Investigation.

Montana.—Comity.

New Hampshire.—Comity. Local co-operation recommended.

New York.—Comity. Local Federations. Moral issues. Investigation.

Rhode Island.—Comity. Local co-operation, three types. Investigation. General co-operation. Monthly organ.

South Dakota.—Comity. Local co-operation. Moral issues.

Vermont.—Comity. Investigation.

Wisconsin.—Comity. General co-operation. Organ jointly with other org.

Declarations and Recommendations.

The Committee recognizing the practical efficiency of State Federations in allaying forces and allaying friction, in ascertaining religious needs, and applying the principles of co-operation to the statesmanship and diplomacy of the Church, desires to make the following declarations and recommendations:

I. DECLARATIONS

1. By an experience beginning in Maine in 1890, we deem it to have been proven that Christian denominations, in the spirit of mutual respect and confidence, evincing broad and charitable toleration each toward the other, can co-operate, by courtesies extended and received, by combination of work and worker, and by concession and surrender of advantage and privilege in concrete cases. The recognition of the individuality and the parity of denominations has been demonstrated to be not a dream, but a reality.

2. We regard the federation of the churches of Christ in the various States of the Nation as indispensable in the realization of the Federal Idea of Christian Forces for which this organization stands. The State Federation is neither too large to lose sight of local conditions, nor too small to fail of the best leadership and the highest ideals.

3. We do not approve of the formation of so-called "union churches," independent of denominational association and supervision, although we recognize their utility in many places and would not wish them disturbed wherever they are useful. But the denomination should be the unit of independency in federation, for it alone maintains agencies for missionary activities at home and abroad; for Christian education; for the publication of Christian books, tracts, and periodicals; and for the maintenance and supervision of an approved Christian ministry.

4. We do not advise or expect men, under the inspiration of the federative principle, lightly to exchange denominational connection and lose the bond of peculiar devotion and attachment which unites them each to the denomination of

his own choice, but we do expect each Christian, while peculiarly of one branch of the Great Kingdom, to recognize all other branches as branches, and himself in right relation to the whole. The principle of federation, while unsectarian, is still consistently denominational.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. We recommend to the several denominations, affiliated in this Federal Council, that they either formally recommend, or at least authorize, their constituent bodies in the several States to enter into co-operation and federation with the constituencies of other denominations in their States, for the more efficient extension of the Kingdom of Christ, and the fuller expression of His spirit among His disciples. It seems desirable that State Federations should have the approval and sanction of the highest ecclesiastical authorities to which the several federating members are amenable, and that State Federations be thereby recognized as orderly and authorized expressions of comity and co-operation, known and approved by each denomination at its headquarters.

2. We recommend that each denomination, through its appropriate organizations and agencies, direct that its superintendents, missionaries, or agents, as its official representatives in the home field may be designated, should seek to foster the organization of State Federations, and should observe, in dealing with other religious bodies or in planting new churches, and in sustaining weak churches of their own faith and order, the principles of comity and co-operation usually embodied in the platform of a State Federation.

3. We recommend to the leaders of denominational enterprises in the several States in which now no State Federation exists, that they investigate the operation of the federative idea in other states and examine conditions within their own States, in order to ascertain whether a federation of churches, or interdenominational commission, might not promote the interests of the Kingdom in their own States. Far better is it for the principle of federation to spring up within the limits of a State, or at least to find receptive appreciation within the

State, than for it to be brought in from without the State by any propaganda, however persuasive and convincing.

4. As for the character of a State Federation we recommend:

(a) That membership in it be elective, or appointive, so that each member shall be a delegate from, and a representative of his own denomination within the State:

(b) That membership be continuing, to the extent at least that all terms of membership shall not expire in the same year:

(c) That the functions of the federation be plainly stated and described as an advisory council without ecclesiastical authority so that each State organization of a denomination may clearly understand the federal compact and know that by sending delegates to the federation, or commission, it is surrendering no powers or responsibilities inherently its own.

(d) That the federation be regarded as a common meeting ground for the denominations, not a new organization, but a new point of view; not a federation, so much as the churches federated; it is not to divert energy or consume energy, so much as it is to direct the energy of the denominations into more useful channels and more promising fields, and thereby save energy and make it more productive of good, and specifically it is to make churches and Christians more efficient in their own distinctive work and to see that the whole commonwealth is so ministered to and cared for that some church, or group of churches, shall be responsible for every square mile.

(e) That the federation be deemed the proper center for co-operation in doing whatever may be wise for the churches to do together either in civil, moral, philanthropic, or religious lines, and by its existence and its use for this purpose the further multiplication of organizations akin to the Church may become unnecessary and their combination and consolidation at some time be rendered possible.





